843 pregnancy are also said to be rare, although miscarriages in later pregnancy up to two or three months before the birth are more numerous because of the continuing heavy work of the mother in the fields. The
849 mother in the agricultural village normally works up to the time for the birth. She eats her normal diet. After birth, the child is placed on a large comforter (futon) beside the mother.

The midwife, after delivery, goes once a day for a week to the mother's home. Her fee is not decided upon before hand, but according
[84L] [965] to custom, averages ¥350 for a normal and ¥500 for a difficult birth, a low fee probably enforced by the poverty and lack of cash of farm families. (In Naha corresponding fees are said to be ¥1-2000).

853 There is no uniform way of feeding the child after birth. In most cases the child is not breast fed until after the third day due to the fact that mothers have little milk at this time. The first, second, and the third days it is fed warm water with small amounts of white sugar, but this is by no means universal. Some mothers have said that they give the child the breast 4 or 5 hours after birth. In any case, the child very quickly becomes accustomed to feeding at the breast, and this continues for an indeterminate period, depending on
[862] the mother and the child. It may be for two years, or until the next child comes. In all communities studied, other arrangements are made in the unlikely event that the mother does not have milk of her own. The child may be given evaporated cow's milk or friends or relatives nurse the child. In Minatogawa, if a woman has special duties or takes a trip out of town and cannot take her child with her, she can pay to have it nursed.

843 One belief regarding pregnancy still exists among the old in the Oinosa area. If a new house is being built during the pregnancy of the woman of the house, the cap of the roof is not put on until after the birth has taken place.

2

Birth Customs and Convalescence

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[184] In Minatogawa, and to a much lesser extent in Hanashiro, birth customs are related to certain beliefs about the pig pen. These were not known in Matsuda. In the two southern villages they have virtually disappeared, except among the old. According to a Hanashiro farmer's
[989] wife, the child on the day of its birth is washed, dressed in new clothes, and carried to the pig pen, which is supposed to frighten away evil spirits (bakemono). [See footnote 1, bottom of p. 257--analyst]

1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

The native medicine, including the use of plants and fish as medicines, the native doctor, the use of cauterization, the golden needle, slashing, and acupuncture, seem to be disappearing in favor of modern patent medicines and drugs, and scientific medicine, nursing, and midwifery. Of all the traditional practices (ultimately derived from China), slashing and burning with moguza seem to have the greatest vitality.

10

Tattooing

Tattooing (ireizumi) in Japanese, dake in Okinawan) is a subject of great historical interest in the Ryukyu chain. In Okinawa, it exists now only among elderly women (in the late sixties and seventies), as it was forbidden by law when the Japanese annexed the islands. Tattooing usually was done on the back of the hands, including the fingers, parts of the wrist, and the knuckles. The design was put on by spreading India ink (often with sake or awamori added) on the surface, pricking out the design and wiping off the surplus, repeating the operation for the lighter parts. To my knowledge, there was no facial tattooing.

Until quite recently tattooing was practiced on men as well. Basil Hall in 1816 wrote of a landing in the south of Okinawa island. "Most of these people had fish spears tatooed on their arms in the form of a trident, with rude barbs." On the right arm it was called (in Hall's transcription) "oodeeman," and on the left, "tooga." Apparently this was confined to fishermen. Furness in his account of the Luchus (1899) observed such markings among young and mature men in Itoman. The explanation given him was that they were a protection against evil spirits. Furness also discussed the theory that tattooing was historically connected with weaving. Simon, in an interesting speculative discussion, based on the designs of cloth in Miyako and their correspondence with house or family markings thought that the tattooing was a means of identifying women's membership in a family.7

This interesting idea unfortunately did not occur to me while in the villages, but the notion that tattooing may have been related

7 Hall's Voyage, as cited, Vocabulary (no pagination). Hall includes sketches of the marks. Furness, Life in the Luchu Islands, as cited, 9. See also Simon's extremely interesting discussion, Beitrage zur Kenntnis der Riukiu-Inseln, as cited, 134-150. Furness and Simon are especially valuable because they personally observed instances of tattooing at a time when it was much more commonly seen. Both authors reproduce patterns which show differences among the islands and among individuals.

1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

The New Year

Two basic themes are expressed in public celebrations and holidays. The first of these is remembrance and respect for the dead. The holidays are in part public observances of basic obligations under the family system. In the second place, holidays are occasions of thanksgiving. In a year there are not many official holidays or rest days. The work year is not interrupted, as is our custom, with week ends which may provide from one to two days of leisure. Sunday is not a day of rest. Officials and school teachers do not work at their official duties on the week ends.

The traditional public holidays are based on the lunar calendar. In the discussion which follows, some holidays have been included, even though they involve only some of the people.

The western New Year is observed perfunctorily. It is observed only by present and former officials and honored elders of a township. The custom, about 40 years old in Gushichan-son, is known as New Year Banquet Party (Shinnenenkai). Headmen from each of the villages, members and former members of the village councils, and respected elders, the mayor and his subordinate officials and members of the township assembly are the chief participants. It is a social event, held in a public building or at a school, a "meeting for conversation" (hanashiai) at which food and sake are served. The event begins early in the afternoon and is generally over by early evening.

Lunar New Year (shōgatsu), the first day of the first lunar month and O-Bon in the seventh lunar month, are the two most important holidays. Lunar New Year falls in late January or early February. (In 1951 it was on February 6; in 1952, on January 27). This is a time of new beginnings, of thanksgiving, family reunions, and observances in honor of the dead. It is a three day holiday, with much prior preparation, and on the third day, there is either a symbolic or a partial return to work.

The new year is preceded by a series of activities on the last day of the 12th month (Ōmisoka). Before the war, these preparations were more elaborate than they are now. In Hinatogawa, bamboo and pine poles with a rice straw rope (shimenawa) hanging across the top were placed at the compound entrance. The purpose was to scare off evil spirits and devils. A piece of charcoal wrapped in sea weed and an orange hung from the rice rope. This custom now is also rare in Matsuda. Only one rice straw rope used for this purpose was observed, and this had been put up some time before the new year.

Other customs of preparing for the new beginning are still observed in all the villages: the house is cleaned; a bath is taken; old debts are paid; the New Year pig is slaughtered, or in the interests of economy three or four families may share a pig. The day before the New Year is the occasion for recalling one's bad deeds and of resolving on

trees of the sacred grove and used old beliefs to preserve the forests. Formerly it was believed that misfortune would come to him who cut a tree in groves sacred to these gods. If the trees were cut, the god would become angry, the person cutting the tree would be the victim of self-induced illness and by worrying about his deed, gradually would become ill, and perhaps die. These sacred groves, whose religious significance is now almost ignored, are arranged to enclose the village from three directions, with the open side on the south. On the north was the sacred grove in the back (ushiro no utaki) or the grove of the white gold mountain (kinpuku utaki in Okinawan). The mountain gods were supposed to live here. On the west was the grove in front (mae no utaki) on the white silver mountain. This was also known as the fire shrine.

The priestesses also had a hand in this worship of the mountain gods. There are about seven of these places of worship now, and there is still a voluntary caretaker, an old woman with tattooed hands, a family priestess (nigami) in the old system. Occasionally one sees an old woman going to a grove to pray. The only other visitors are the farmers who walk along the paths of the grove on their way to the fields.

7

Other Religious Observances

There are a few other observations which may have some interest. Old women use patches of grass or knotted rice straw to ward off the spirits on days when they are thought to be abroad in great numbers. At the festival of the autumnal equinox, knotted or braided grass (shiba) is placed in various parts of the house. In some houses, bunches are suspended from the cross beams, perhaps three or four bunches to the side. They may be placed in the toilet, at the entrance to the house compound, on the water barrel in the kitchen, on the front and back of fishing boats, or in the interior of the house. Blades of miscanthus grass may be tied around the neck of a bean paste jug (misogami). Spirits, plentiful at this time, are frightened away by the patches of grass and will not enter. The young, while not believing in this, acquiesce to avoid making the old angry.

When a death anniversary is being celebrated, there may be a blade of miscanthus, a rice straw, or a knotted blade of grass on the top of a box of candies or sweet meats to prevent the intrusion of evil spirits. A blade of grass (the san) is occasionally tied around the handle of a tea pot. For the first week after a family death, tea is served from a pot which has this blade of grass. But these are almost invariably the observances of the old and are only infrequently seen. These customs, observed in Hinatogawa, are said to survive among the very old in the other villages.

In Matsuda, a rice rope (shimenawa) was observed at one home. The rice rope, a Shinto symbol, is not common in Okinawan culture. This

rope was hung across the entrance of the family compound two times a year, on the 9th day of the 8th month, and on the 8th day of the 12th month. Along the rope, there were knotted blades of grass, also the san plant. The purpose is to frighten away evil spirits and evil doers. One peculiarity of this twisted rice rope is that it is made in a different manner from the ordinary rope. The usual rope is a twist made by rolling the fibre between the palms to the right or away from the body. In this special rope, the roll is reversed and is to the left or toward the body. It is difficult for a person already skilled in the regular method. This villager told of going to two noro priestesses in the village of Yabu who specialized in teaching this method of making ropes. The husband and the wife received instruction, paying about ¥40 for it because the wife believed in the efficacy of the practice. Each year at the proper times, the husband now makes the special rope himself.

Some fortune telling practices shade into religious beliefs, just as religious customs have also included soothsaying and divination. The noros and the Buddhist priests formerly practiced some fortune telling. There were no fortune tellers in any of the villages studied, but villagers occasionally consult them. Here, too, the patronage comes largely from the old and from the women. Younger people, if they know about them, regard these practices as superstitions unworthy of belief. The word meishin (superstition) is frequently heard among the young in describing customs and beliefs of the old. The sign of the fortune teller (sanjinsō) is the Chinese character for three written three times. These characters are said to signify the three states of existence, pre-natal, the present, and the afterlife, on all of which the fortune teller is well versed. Those in Hanashiro and Hinatogawa who wish to consult a fortune teller go to Itoman; those in Matsuda go to Nago. The cost is usually from ¥40-50 a visit. Typical reasons for a consultation with a fortune teller are: (1) to find out if an ill person will become well, (2) among the fishermen, to find out if the fishermen will return when an unexpected storm has arisen, (3) to discover if a present unhappiness has been caused by the evil deed of an ancestor and if this can be corrected, and (4) to find out the lucky days for such undertakings as marriages, building a house, or beginning new phases of construction.

Old women may utter a prayer on seeing a child fall, fearing that the child's spirit might escape because of surprise or fright. (This was observed in Hinatogawa).

In Matsuda, there were shelves for burning charcoal sticks in some of the numerous caves in the area. The nature of the worship could not be ascertained, but they may be offerings to deities of the cave.

Worship and prayers in the toilet seem to have completely disappeared. There were no personified toilet gods. The toilet apparently was the place in which thanks were given that a place for excrement had been provided. In all the villages, it was said to be an old belief which has now died out. There was no shelf or special place of worship in the toilet.